


A
Report
on
the

Impact of
Meaningful
Academic
Partnerships

Parental ENGAGEMENT in TENNESSEE

as presented by the Office of the First Lady of Tennessee





PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN TENNESSEE

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04

A REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF MEANINGFUL ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS



Cristen Garrett Haslam

STATE OF TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY

Dear Friends:

As First Lady of Tennessee, I believe that education can be a very powerful mechanism for change. Bill is focused on bringing jobs to Tennessee and as he has been meeting with employers throughout the state, one of their main concerns is the education of our workforce. In 2011, Tennessee was ranked in the bottom 10 states in college and career readiness;¹ as Tennesseans, we are capable of so much more! Many Tennesseans are working hard to improve education in our state, and Bill and I are very grateful for those efforts.

As part of my initiative, I spent the 2011-2012 school year visiting schools all across the state to learn from principals, teachers, students and parents about the value of forging partnerships between families and schools to support student learning. I feel honored to have met many tremendous teachers and administrators, and I'm encouraged by the passion of parents and families to do whatever it takes for their children to succeed in school.

This report compiles much of the research that spurred my interest in parent engagement and literacy development, and ultimately, gave purpose to the School Partnerships. While not nearly exhaustive, I hope this report is informative, helpful, and encouraging to the work that continues in Tennessee around education reform. I am so grateful to the many educators and families who welcomed me to their school and readily shared their triumphs and challenges around education. Many of their successes are included in this report.

As parents, grandparents, and co-chairs of the Tennessee Children's Cabinet, Bill and I are wholeheartedly committed to helping to create the brightest futures possible for Tennessee's young people. Government is only part of the solution, and it is my hope that by focusing on parent engagement and literacy, we can have a huge impact on the future health, wealth, and employability of Tennesseans.

Warmest regards,

Crissy Haslam
First Lady of Tennessee

¹Source: ACT State Profile Report, 2011

INTRODUCTION

At-risk children who start school unprepared are twice as likely to be in special education, 40% more likely to become a teen parent, 60% more likely to never go to college, and 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.ⁱⁱⁱ

As job creation and retention has been a top priority in Governor Haslam's administration, employers say that their biggest concern is the education of the Tennessee workforce. Since Governor Haslam's inauguration in January 2011, First Lady Haslam has been working to raise awareness for the importance of a parent's role in the early years of a child's development, the significance of a parent's engagement in a child's education at school and at home, and the exponential value of children and families reading together for at least 20 minutes every day.

Last year in Tennessee, the high school graduation rate was approximately 85%.ⁱ Although a number of issues contribute to high school dropout, many of the 750,000 Tennesseans without a high school diplomaⁱⁱ were behind in school long before they made the decision to drop out. A strong body of research suggests that 3rd grade reading proficiency is an accurate predictor of high school graduation. In order to read proficiently by 3rd grade, children need a healthy foundation of early learning and exposure to books, beginning at birth, in order to be prepared to learn in a formal schooling environment by the start of kindergarten.

Parents and guardians are a child's first and most important teacher, and their role in ensuring that children are beginning kindergarten with the foundational skills they need to be successful is crucial for the future of education and economic development in Tennessee. We all have a stake in student outcomes in Tennessee because an educated state is healthier, wealthier, and more employable.

THE NEED FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS PARENT ENGAGEMENT?

Parent engagement is the collaboration between families and schools that drives student achievement. The Harvard Family Research Project further defines parent engagement as a shared responsibility among families, schools and communities in building partnerships to support children's learning. As we discuss this topic, we use the term "parent" broadly, understanding that other adults, such as grandparents, guardians or foster parents, may share in contributing to a child's educational development and well-being.

Parent-child interaction in the first years of a child's life is an important element in preparing children for kindergarten. Sending children to school with the skills they need to learn in a formal school setting is arguably the most helpful facet of parent engagement.

WHY IS PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Students spend on average 60-70% of their time outside of the school building, so it is imperative that families initiate and reinforce learning in the home.^{iv} There is a significant association between family engagement and the academic achievement of elementary and middle school students.

"Many of our challenges in education could be prevented or diminished with greater involvement from parents or guardians at home. Every school and every teacher does best with strong support from families and communities."

**-Lou Newbill—Principal,
Dyersburg Intermediate School**

In fact, certain forms of family engagement, such as having high expectations and helping a child apply learning, are strong predictors of achievement.^v Research on the federal Head Start program shows that children whose parents are more involved at home or at school are more motivated and have higher attention spans and persistence in academics.^{vi}

When it comes to schooling, the most effective forms of parent engagement are those which involve parents working directly with their children on learning activities at home. Research says that the two most important things that parents can do are showing interest in homework and reading together as a family.^{vii} It's an important distinction that knowing *how* to help with homework is not what is vital—it's being *interested in* homework that matters.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN TENNESSEE

How a parent or guardian interacts with his or her child outside of school sets the stage for progress in the classroom. For parents of babies and toddlers, this can mean speaking to young children in full sentences, reading every day, and providing simple early learning experiences. For parents of school-age children, this can mean continuing to read at home, talking to teachers about what their child is learning, and discovering where he or she can improve.

07

2001

THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT GAVE PARENTS CHOICES IF THEIR CHILDREN WERE IN A FAILING SCHOOL. ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT CARDS HAD TO SHOW STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON STATE ASSESSMENTS, TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, AND GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS. DISTRICTS ALSO HAD TO CONDUCT ANNUAL EVALUATIONS FOR THEIR PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICIES, AND STATES WERE REQUIRED TO REVIEW THESE POLICIES. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE STILL IN PLACE TODAY.

1974

ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WERE REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS BEFORE SUBMITTING TITLE I FUNDING APPLICATIONS.

1978

CONGRESS PASSED THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE TITLE I MANDATES RELATED TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT.

TIMELINE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT REGULATIONS UNDER THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT^{IX}

1998

IASA ADDED PROVISIONS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS RECEIVING OVER \$500,000 YEARLY IN TITLE I FUNDS WERE REQUIRED TO RESERVE AT LEAST 1 PERCENT OF THOSE FUNDS FOR ACTIVITIES TO INVOLVE PARENTS. EACH SCHOOL WAS ALSO REQUIRED TO DEVELOP A SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT DESCRIBING THEIR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

1981

THE 1978 PROVISIONS WERE REPEALED AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT LANGUAGE WAS REDUCED TO A SINGLE REQUIREMENT THAT SCHOOLS HOLD AN ANNUAL MEETING OF TITLE I PARENTS TO INFORM THEM ABOUT THE PROGRAM.

1988

CONGRESS ADDED REQUIREMENTS THAT LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES DEVELOP POLICIES THAT ENSURED PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TITLE I PROGRAMS, AND PROVIDE PARENTS WITH TIMELY AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROGRAMS.

1994

CONGRESS PASSED THE IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOL ACT (IASA), WHICH FOCUSED ON STANDARDS ALIGNED WITH ASSESSMENTS, CONSEQUENCES FOR SCHOOLS THAT DID NOT MEET STATE EXPECTATIONS AND PARENTAL CHOICE.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT STANDARDS FOR TENNESSEE

[Source: Nashville Chamber of Commerce 19th Annual Education Report Card, p. 22]

Standard 1: Welcoming All Families

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in school.

Standard 2: Communicating

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.

Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously work together to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are informed and enabled to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Standard 5: Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners with equal representation in decisions that affect students and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.

Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

Families and school staff work together with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community service and civic participation.

A strong body of research supports that students do better in school and life when their parents are engaged with their learning, both inside and outside the school building. Researchers examining family engagement practices at 18 schools nationwide found that communication with families and offering family workshops helped both chronically and occasionally absent students. Home visits from teachers and school staff also improved chronic absence rates.^x Studies of schools instituting high-quality family engagement programs also show that these schools have higher attendance rates than similarly matched schools without such programs.^{xi}

Another national longitudinal study found that school-based family involvement from kindergarten through fifth grade was associated with improved student-teacher relationships among low-income families^{xii} and their children. When parents increased their involvement, their child's relationship with their teacher improved. To the contrary, when parents decreased their involvement, this relationship decreased in quality. Research also demonstrates that family engagement helps close educational gaps between

children from different racial groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.^{xiv}

While a parent's participation in school itself is valuable, what matters most is that a parent takes an active role in a child's life, including supporting learning at home or away from a school building.^{xv}

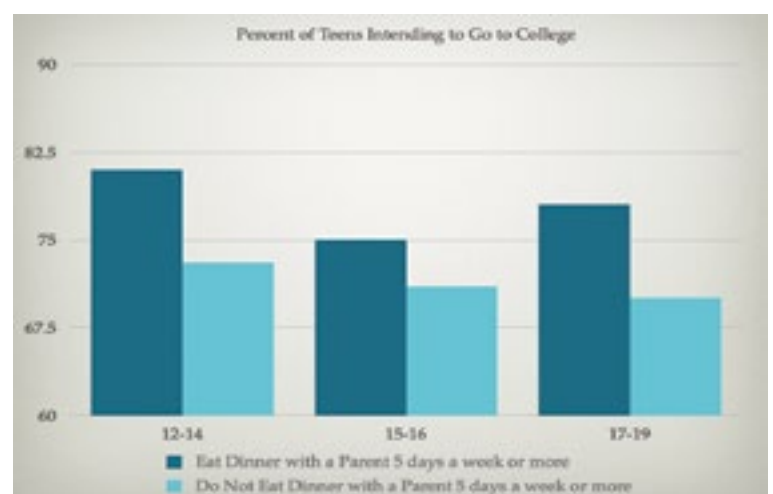
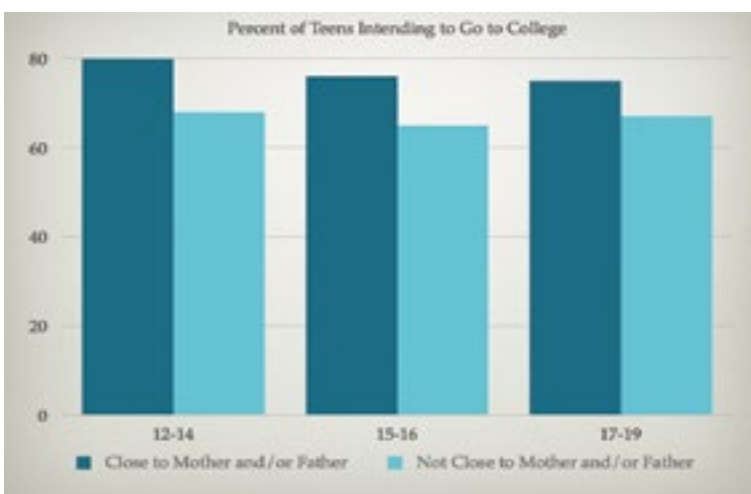
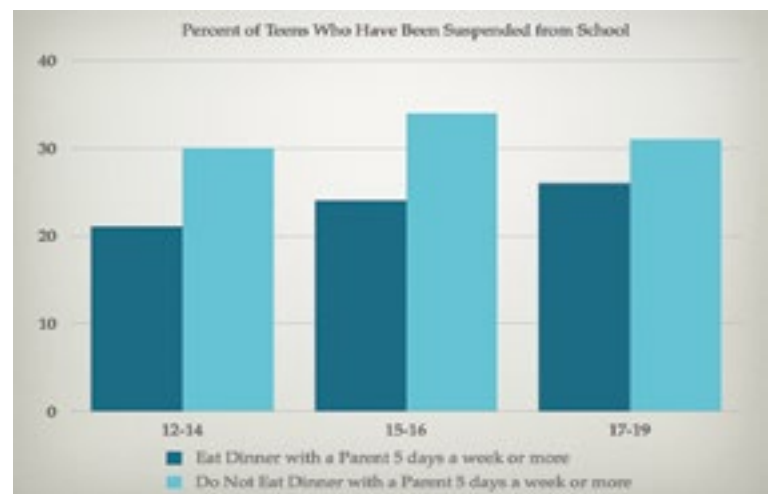
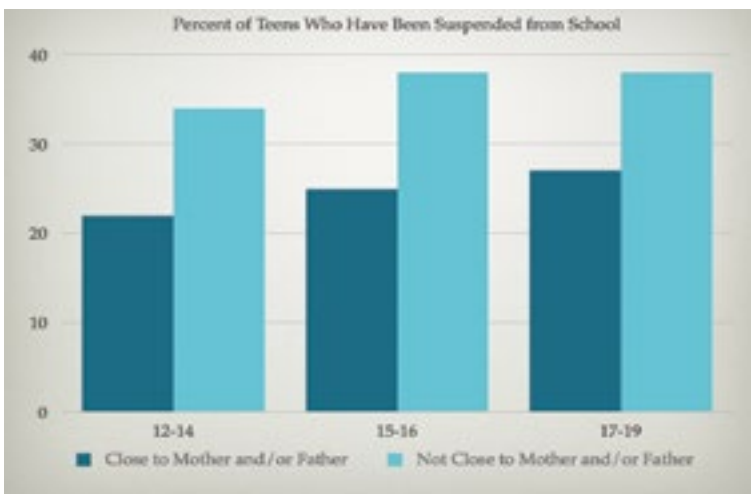
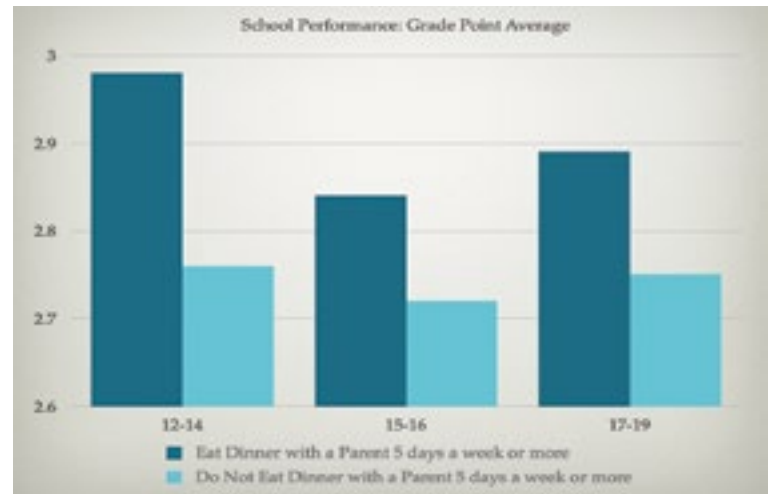
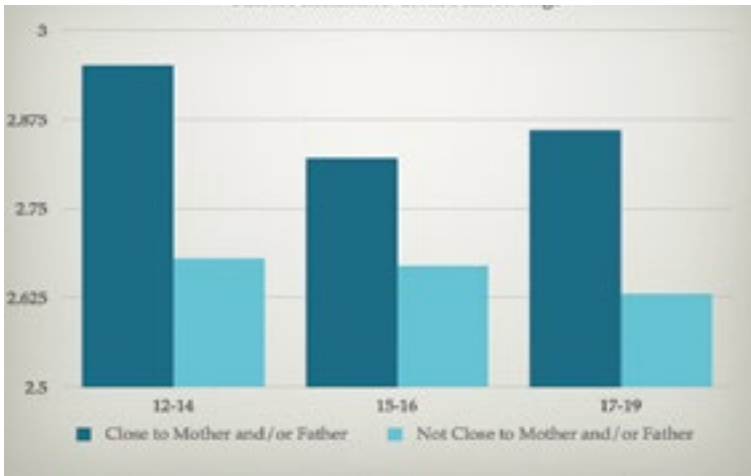
In a report presented at the White House Conference on Teenagers in 2000, the Council of Economic Advisers analyzed key trends in teen behavior and investigated the role of parents' involvement in their teenagers' lives and its impact on education. The report findings highlighted that parental involvement is a major influence in helping teens avoid risky behavior and increasing education achievement and expected attainment.^{xvi}

"Part of encouraging parents to take a more active and encouraging role in their child's education is to bring home the point that without a better education their quality of life not only won't improve, it won't be maintained at the family's current level. If we can support parents' understanding that a child's economic future is dependent on education, they'll get more involved."

-Kevin Huffman—Commissioner,
TN Department of Education

“ [The report showed that] a close relationship with a parent is ... associated with higher grades and a greater intention to go to college.^{xvii} ”

The following charts are appropriated from the Council of Economic Advisers report data and illustrate whether and how parent-child relationships impact various education outcome indicators for students.



TENNESSEE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

TN PTA is a statewide non-profit organization that seeks to unite the forces of home, school, and community on behalf of children and youth. <http://tnpta.org/>

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN TENNESSEE • 2012

READING AT GRADE LEVEL

IMPROVING LITERACY IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF HASLAM'S INITIATIVE AND WAS ONE OF THE GOALS FOR THE STATEWIDE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS.

WHY 3RD GRADE READING?

To graduate our children from high school, we need to first be sure that they are reading on grade level in 3rd grade. Outside of parental support, 3rd grade reading proficiency has the biggest impact on the probability that a child will graduate from high school.^{xviii} If a young student cannot read on grade level in 3rd grade, his chances of succeeding in subsequent grades without reading intervention decrease tremendously. Unfortunately, poverty and illiteracy are closely connected. One in four children in rural America are living in poverty and struggling to read on grade level.^{xix} This troubling statistic has great economic impact, including higher healthcare costs, decreased tax revenue, and higher crime rates.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, if just half of Tennessee's dropouts had graduated, then this single class of "new graduates" could collectively earn as much as \$179 million more in an average year compared to their likely earnings without a high school diploma. If in Tennessee we are able to graduate all of our students ready for college, the state would save approximately \$70 million in college remediation costs and lost earnings.^{xx} Educated children and a prepared workforce translate to less dependence on government-funded programs, lower government spending, and a more balanced budget.

Because reading proficiency is such a strong predictor of success and academic outcomes, bringing up strong readers matters for businesses and the strength of the Tennessee workforce. Students' scores in reading comprehension are consistently associated with their later economic success. In fact, according to the Children's Reading Foundation, for every year a child is read to for at least 20 minutes a day, their average lifetime earnings increase by \$50,000.

Reading is the foundation upon which education is built, and it must be laid early. Children who are read to outside of school are much more likely to gain skills associated with reading competency, including vocabulary comprehension, fluency, and reading confidence. A significant part of this effort is emphasizing to parents their role as first teachers and the importance of becoming full partners in their child's education.

Brain development research makes it clear that the most significant time for investing in children for literacy is early, even as early as infancy. The more words that are spoken to an 8-month-old infant, the greater the size of the child's vocabulary at age 3.^{xxi} Another study on language development showed that children living in poverty hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers before the age of 4.^{xxii}

Early reading scores correlate very closely with high school graduation rates. Children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are three to four times more likely to drop out in later years.^{xxiii} Low early literacy is also associated with higher poverty, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, health problems, and crime rates.^{xxiv}

In low-income neighborhoods, the ratio of books per child is one age-appropriate book for every 300 children.^{xxv} Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a global program that provides children with access to free books—one free book is mailed each month to registered children from birth until age 5. Imagination Library is available to every child in Tennessee. Access to age-appropriate books is an integral part of building a strong academic base, and our children need materials to read at home. The Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, housed in the Office of the First Lady, partners with Imagination Library to manage the statewide implementation of the program across the state.

“The first three years of life are a critical period for language development, because the brain is developing rapidly and is most receptive to new information. This is reflected in the dramatic changes in language use which can be observed during this period. Generally, a baby’s first spoken words occur at about one year, although comprehension begins several months earlier. At first, vocabulary growth is slow, but between 18 months and 3 years most children experience a vocabulary explosion, after which growth levels off until about the first grade. Because of the importance of this early stage of learning, your home is your baby’s first classroom, and you are the teacher.”

- Barbara Holden
Urban Child Institute



VIDEO: EARLY EXPERIENCES BUILD BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

This video shows how a child’s early experiences set a foundation for brain development and future learning.
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/three_core_concepts/brain_architecture/

Recent TCAP scores show that we have room to improve literacy rates in Tennessee, and committing to reading to children is a significant step toward that goal. In 2011, 46% of 3rd graders scored proficient or advanced on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), which means that more than half of our Tennessee 3rd graders are not reading proficiently.^{xxvi} We have to be preoccupied with teaching our children to read, because it is a foundational skill upon which the rest of schooling is built. Until third grade, we teach our children to read, because from thereafter, they read to learn. Without appropriate grade level reading, children are not equipped for the transition from acquiring reading skills to using the skill to learn other things.

In 2010, 42.3% of third graders were reading proficiently or above. In 2011 the statewide reading scores increased 1.1 points to 43.4% of third graders reading proficiently or above, and to 45.9% in 2012.

“Early literacy is the foundation for academic success, and if children and families commit to reading twenty minutes every day, that’s a tremendous step toward brighter academic futures and greater opportunities in life.”

-Theresa Carl-President, Governor’s Books from Birth Foundation



If families and caregivers can provide quality early childhood development, then children will start school ready to learn.

If children start school ready to learn, they are more likely to read at grade level by third grade.

If children read at grade level by third grade, they are more likely to graduate from high school.

If children graduate from high school, they are more likely to go on to higher education and/or enter the job market as a tax-paying citizen.

Employable, tax-paying citizens are critical to a vital economy.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



First Lady Crissy Haslam addresses teachers and faculty at Dyersburg City Schools.

In May 2011, Haslam announced that she would partner with 10 schools across the state to visit and meet with administrators, teachers, parents and students about various issues facing Tennessee schools. The Department of Education helped select the 10 partnership schools based on their 3rd grade TCAP reading scores, which were below the state reading proficiency average in 2010 but showed promise for improvement.

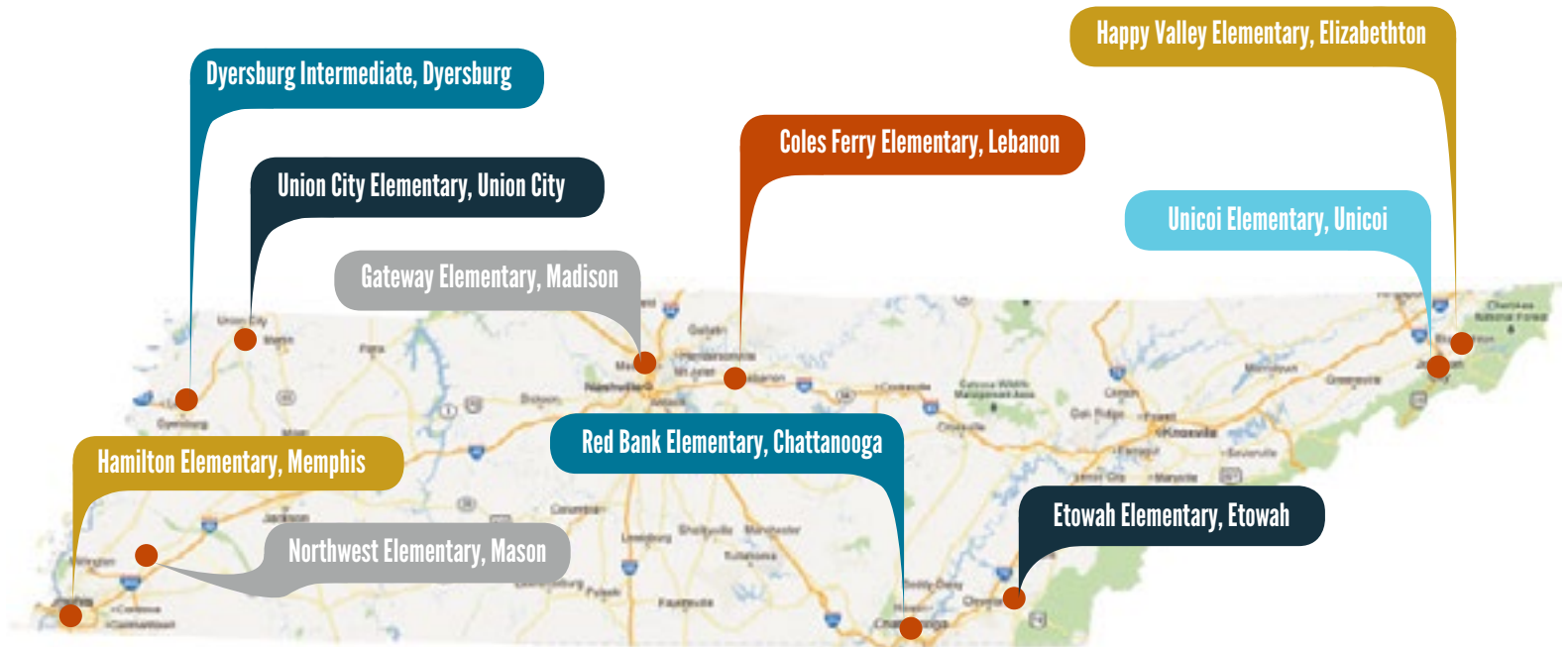


First Lady Crissy Haslam visits a classroom at Gateway Elementary in Nashville, one of her Partnership Schools, to promote her READ20 initiative.

During visits to partnership schools, Haslam met with school administrators and teachers to discuss reading progress and to learn more about their plans to increase reading proficiency. Haslam also invited parents and families to participate in roundtable discussions about how schools can better engage parents in school activities and encourage learning at home. Haslam visited classrooms to read with students and talk about the importance of reading for at least 20 minutes every day. Over the course of the year, Haslam delivered more than 10,000 books to students across the state.

The purpose of the school visits was to observe different school environments and to learn from principals, teachers, students and parents about the various approaches to encouraging a strong partnership between schools and families.

FIRST LADY 2011–2012 PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS



EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

During the yearlong School Partnerships, Haslam met with principals, teachers, and parents in schools throughout the state to learn about their ideas for communicating with and involving parents in education. While not nearly exhaustive, compiled here are just a few ideas and approaches that were most commonly mentioned by schools as being helpful in developing and maintaining relationships between schools and families to support student achievement.

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CONNECTING WITH PARENTS

- All schools utilize the school's notification system to routinely contact parents and families as a group with important information.
- Using school and classroom websites as a great way to communicate with parents, Happy Valley Elementary posts articles for parents on topics like reading education, helping with homework, and setting high academic expectations.
- In order to encourage communication between students and their parents, Etowah Elementary requires students to fill out an exit card with information about their day at school. The cards are sent home for parents to encourage dialogue about the school day and what students are learning.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NIGHTS

- Inviting families to participate in themed parties at the school is a great way to engage parents.

Some creative ideas include:

- Multicultural Literacy Luau night to engage ELL families in reading
- Math and Money night helps parents with financial literacy and how to plan for college and scholarships
- Bingo for Books and Book Swaps
- CSI Mystery Night to solve a mystery using math
- March Math Madness to encourage math during the NCAA Basketball Tournament
- Muffins with Mom and Donuts with Dad to give parents strategies for reading with children

IMPROVING LITERACY

- The VIP Program at Coles Ferry Elementary invites retirees from a nearby retirement community to read with students. These volunteers come every week and work with one or two children for the year. The students go to the Retirement Home at the end of the year to thank their reading partner and that event inspires others to volunteer.
- Some schools find having a data coach helpful in maximizing the use of data to reach their literacy goals.
- Gateway Elementary's Sidekicks program pairs elementary students with teens to read together.
- Gateway Elementary tries to empower third grade teachers to continue emphasizing literacy by partnering third grade teachers with a first grade teacher who is on the front line in teaching reading.
- All students at Hamilton Elementary are assigned 15 minutes of reading as homework each night.

SUMMER IDEAS

- Dyersburg City Schools offer "Early Literacy for Families (ELF) Summer Reading Program" for three and four year olds. They are using community sites and pairing one teacher and one aspiring teacher with a small group of preschoolers. Parents agree to read with children for 20 minutes every night and record their time in a reading log.
- Dyersburg Intermediate also offers "Trojan Tuesdays" for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders with educational activities around health, gardening, exercise, and literacy.

OUT OF THE BOX

- Provide breakfast sessions for parents and families at school to encourage relationships between families and school staff. Food and free meals are always powerful incentives.
- Install a small laundromat at the school for parent use. This is not only helpful for many parents, but it gets parents into the school building and creates a great opportunity to connect with and support families.
- Designate one day each week for a social worker to be on-site to conduct meetings with parents who are receiving state benefits. Many state benefit programs, including SNAP and TennCare, require periodic meetings with a care manager or social worker (depending on renewal dates), so offering the school building as a venue for these meetings creates opportunity for parents to visit their child's school.
- Use school facilities to offer resources like parent education courses and after-school tutoring and mentoring programs.

SUCCESS STORIES

“Parents, just as much as teachers and principals, share in the responsibility to teach our children. If schools and parents work together, we can do so much more for our students.”

- Chad High—Principal,
Cole Elementary School

In addition to parents, teachers and schools play an important part in facilitating better parent engagement. Below are two great examples of different ways to reach out to families in order to build positive relationships between families and schools. Many schools have confirmed that meeting families in their home is incredibly valuable for developing relationships with parents and maintaining consistent lines of open communication.



First Lady Crissy Haslam and Cole Elementary faculty Chad High and Chad Hedgepath visit a family at their home on a “Back to School Knock.”

EXAMPLE 1: Cole Elementary— “Back to School Knock”

In July 2012, Haslam joined Cole Elementary School administrators, teachers and staff and about 100 local volunteers to visit the homes of every Cole Elementary student on one Saturday morning. Teachers met with their students’ families on their front doorstep to distribute important information about the school, such as the school’s parental engagement policy and helpful tips on ways families can be involved in their child’s academic life.

This approach of walking door-to-door to meeting families in their home is most conducive in an urban setting with a high density school district.

EXAMPLE 2: Dyersburg City Schools— “Bus Tour”

To help facilitate relationships between the school and families, Haslam joined district administrators, teachers and staff on a school bus to make stops around the Dyersburg community in July 2012.

The bus tour stopped at churches, community centers, and a neighborhood pool, where students and families were waiting to meet their teachers and receive important information about the school.



First Lady Crissy Haslam and Dyersburg Intermediate School Principal Lou Newbill visit with students at a community center during the Dyersburg City Schools Bus Tour.

This approach of making stops at several locations throughout a community works best in a widespread rural school district.



PARENT ENGAGEMENT VIDEO

Click here to watch a video featuring Cole Elementary’s “Back to School Knock” and Dyersburg City Schools Bus Tour with First Lady Haslam. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnungcW79VM>

OTHER INVOLVEMENT

“Churches know the needs of their neighborhoods, and first ladies and leading ladies of churches have incredible influence within their congregations. This initiative is a relational way for churches to impact families and parents for generations.”

**- Ephie Johnson - President & CEO,
Neighborhood Christian Center**

During the course of the School Partnerships, Haslam highlighted the importance of parents and schools working together to impact a child's educational future. While families and schools play the most significant role in a child's academic success, there is room for the community to walk alongside families and teachers to give students the confidence they need to be excellent students. We all have a stake in child's outcomes, so nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, private corporations, and community members and neighbors can also play a critical role in education reform.

In recognizing that many entities can have a collective impact on their local communities, Haslam has been involved in a number of other initiatives to support children and families in Tennessee.



Ephie Johnson, President and CEO of the Neighborhood Christian Center, addresses First Ladies and leading ladies of churches at the Memphis launch of “First Ladies for Healthy Babies.”

FIRST LADIES FOR HEALTHY BABIES

First Ladies for Healthy Babies is an initiative to connect women in the faith-based community with young parents for mentoring and disseminating important information regarding child development and healthy parenting practices. First Ladies for Healthy Babies began in August 2010 with an emphasis on a few churches in the Memphis area. In June 2011, the initiative was launched as an official network with a kick-off luncheon and gala co-hosted by Haslam and the Neighborhood Christian Center in Memphis. The event brought together more than 175 first ladies and leading ladies of churches in the Memphis area to learn about the goals of the initiative and commit to its growth.

The progress of the First Ladies for Healthy Babies initiative in Memphis, in coordination with other entities, is leading to the development of a statewide network of similar groups of women from faith-based communities throughout Tennessee. One such expansion is in Nashville, where Haslam hosted local First Ladies of churches, young mothers, health professionals, and local nonprofit and faith-based representatives at the Tennessee Executive Residence for its Chapter launch.



First Lady Crissy Haslam invited guests to the Tennessee Executive Residence to launch a Nashville chapter of “First Ladies for Healthy Babies.”



FIRST LADIES FOR HEALTHY BABIES.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPRUPTV9My8&feature=relmfu>

FIRST LADY'S READ20 BOOK CLUB

Reading is the basic tool for success in school, work, and life and must be promoted early in childhood. The First Lady's READ20 Book Club encourages Tennessee children and families to read together each day to help young children develop a larger vocabulary, a longer attention span, better listening skills, and a solid reading foundation.

One book is selected each month as the featured "Book of the Month" for children and families of all ages. Whether a 5th grader reading independently, or a younger child being read to by an adult or older sibling, the featured books will appeal to a broad group of elementary-aged children and their families.



Governor and First Lady Haslam invited members of the Boys & Girls Club of Middle Tennessee to a Nashville Sounds game in promotion of the "First Lady's READ20 Book Club."



RAISE YOUR HAND TENNESSEE

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Raise Your Hand Tennessee is a United Way statewide collaborative effort to recruit volunteers to read, tutor, and mentor Tennessee's children and help them succeed in school and in life.

While parents are a child's first teacher, and teachers do a great job of emphasizing reading in their classrooms,

"Research shows that volunteer readers, tutors and mentors help children enter school ready to succeed, read proficiently by 4th grade, make transition in and out of middle school, and graduate from high school on time. We need Tennesseans to raise their hands and volunteer to help our state's kids succeed in school and in life."

-Mary Graham—President, United Ways of Tennessee



First Lady Crissy Haslam joins partners of United Ways of Tennessee at a press conference to launch "Raise Your Hand Tennessee."

there is room for the community to walk alongside families and teachers to give students the confidence they need to become excellent readers, and

ultimately, more successful in school and in life.

Research shows that caring adults working with kids of all ages, from the early years through high school, can help boost academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

Haslam recognizes the unique role she can play as First Lady of Tennessee to raise awareness for the importance of a parent's role in the early years of a child's development, the significance of a parent's engagement in a child's education at school and at home, and the exponential value of children and families reading together for at least 20 minutes every day.

Haslam extends her appreciation and gratitude to the students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and nonprofit organizations that played such an important part in the success and productivity of the School Partnerships. Many people and organizations are instrumental in working toward improving outcomes for children in Tennessee and show continued commitment to helping children and families to be healthy, safe, and educated.

We hope this annual review of First Lady Haslam's initiative highlights a few of the positive activities around education reform in Tennessee, and we look forward to the next steps in the progress we can create together.

APPENDIX 1: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND LITERACY HEADLINES

Listed below are recent news headlines about parent engagement and literacy throughout the country.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

CO: Loveland parents volunteer to learn to help their own children

http://www.reporterherald.com/news/loveland-local-news/ci_20152589/loveland-parents-volunteer-learn-help-their-own-children?source=most_viewed

CT: Community association to teach parents advocacy

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/parentsandthepublic/2012/03/bridgeport_community_association_to_teach_parents_advocacy.html?cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2

MA: Children's organization hosts parent involvement carnival

<http://www.heraldnews.com/news/x1343991704/Schwartz-Center-for-Children-to-hold-Summer-Carnival-in-Dartmouth>

MD: Make it easier for parents to get involved

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-student-conferences-20120305,0,2367484.story>

NC: Meeting to focus on parents' role

http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full_story/18311767/article-Meeting-to-focus-on-parents%E2%80%99-role-

NC: Parent volunteers help fill gaps at schools hit by budget cuts

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3rd grade a pivotal time in students' lives

<http://www.npr.org/2012/05/14/152683322/third-grade-a-pivotal-time-in-students-lives>

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<http://schoolsofthought.blogs.cnn.com/2012/09/06/my-view-parent-engagement-child-success/>

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<http://www.parentinvolvementmatters.org/articles/bake-sale.html>

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http://www.mlive.com/education/index.ssf/2012/07/if_parental_involvement_is_a_k.html

Important questions for engaging every family

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Parent involvement in schools must go beyond studies

<http://www.todayonline.com/Voices/EDC120607-0000057/Parental-involvement-in-schools-must-go-beyond-studies>

Parent involvement through childhood is priceless

<http://www.colusa-sun-herald.com/news/children-8243-parents-involved.html>

Program teaches parents how to advocate for children

<http://meriden.patch.com/articles/leadership-training-helps-parents-find-their-voice>

Research-based tools for parent and family engagement

<http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/giving-children-and-families-a-head-start-research-based-tools-for-parent-and-family-engagement-in-early-childhood>

The keys to parental involvement

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2012/03/16/the-keys-to-parental-involvement.html>

Time for parent accountability in nation's schools

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Welcoming families and their ideas into Kindergarten classrooms

<http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/a-new-approach-to-transitions-welcoming-families-and-their-ideas-into-kindergarten-classrooms>

White House Blog: Parent Involvement in schools is key to our children's success

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LITERACY

ID: Teacher of the Year calls for focus on reading

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2012/mar/12/idaho-teacher-year-focus-early-reading/>

OH: Region mobilizes to ensure 3rd graders read well

<http://communitypress.cincinnati.com/article/AB/20120311/NEWS0102/303110095/Region-mobilizes-ensure-3rd-graders-can-read-well?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7Ccommunities%7Cs>

SC: Program helps students read at grade level

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/story/040612-laura-coakley--3913959>

13 states adopt 3rd grade reading policy, but details vary

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state_edwatch/2012/08/a_busy_year_for_states_third-grade_reading_policies.html?cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2

Award-winning teacher calls for focus on early literacy

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2012/mar/12/idaho-teacher-year-focus-early-reading/>

Blog: Counting words adds up to literacy growth

<http://gothamschools.org/2012/05/04/at-democracy-prep-counting-words-adds-up-to-literacy-growth/>

Creating a reading culture at home

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/book_whisperer/2012/03/share_a_story_shape_a_future_c.html?cmp=ENL-EU-VIEWS2

Lower literacy levels and the impact on the economy

<http://www.wktv.com/news/local/Lower-literacy-levels-and-the-impact-on-the-economy-153278115.html>

New literacy standards could challenge even passionate readers

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/04/03/28pnbk_reading.h31.html?tkn=QUXF58HAGPok5VsRsIqIdTafD1K4xGrDLiz6&cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2

Reading and college readiness

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/jun12/vol69/num09/Reading-and-College-Readiness.aspx>

Reading and language growth: what it takes

<http://blog.coreknowledge.org/2012/03/14/reading-and-language-growth-what-it-takes/>

Schools work to meet reading guarantee

<http://www.springfieldnewsun.com/news/news/local/schools-work-to-meet-reading-guarantee/nRDpP/>

The effects of a responsive parenting intervention on parent-child interactions during shared book-reading

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The link between reading level and dropout rates

<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/the-link-between-reading-level-and-dropout-rates/>

Third grade poverty guarantee

<http://www.plunderbund.com/2012/03/31/reading-guarantee-not-enough-kasichs-study-conveys-need-for-a-third-grade-poverty-guarantee/>

APPENDIX 2: TOOLS FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

Helping Your Child Series is a publication series aimed to provide parents with the tools and information necessary to help their children succeed in school and life.

www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html

Questions Parents Ask About Schools

www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/questions/questions.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education: Links for Parents

www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/fpinvolveparents.shtml

Tennessee Department of Education: Links for Educators

www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/fpinvolveeducators.shtml

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND RELATED LINKS

Comcast Internet Essentials offers discounted internet access and home computers to families that meet low income requirements.

www.internetessentials.com/default.aspx

Common Core Standards help ensure that Tennessee students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

www.corestandards.org/the-standards

Imagination Library sends a FREE book to registered children every month to until they are 5 years old.

www.imaginationlibrary.com/

Reading Bear is a completely free website to teach children to read by introducing new vocabulary and skills through videos and visual presentations.

www.readingbear.org/

State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan advocacy and research institution that collaboratively supports Tennessee's work to prepare students for college and the workforce.

www.tnscore.org/

Tennessee Diploma Project is an initiative to raise Tennessee's standards and curriculum to better prepare students to be successful after high school.

www.tn.gov/TDP/

Tennessee Education Association Parent Center gives families resources to partner in their child's education.

www.teateachers.org

Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) is a virtual library that you can access from your home computer, your school library computer lab, or your mobile phone – anywhere with an internet connection.

www.tntel.tnsos.org/index.htm

Tennessee Public Libraries

www.publiclibraries.com/tennessee.htm

TennHelp is a tool you can use to find agencies and organizations across Tennessee that can help you and your family.

www.tennhelp.com/

United Ways of Tennessee brings together people and resources in our state to help meet the needs of our friends, neighbors, co-workers and families.

www.uwtn.org/

WatchKnowLearn.org is a collection of FREE educational videos for kids, teachers, and families.

www.watchknowlearn.org/

ENDNOTES

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**The Office of the First Lady
of the State of Tennessee
Crissy Haslam**



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